



Testimony to Appropriations Committee
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Representative Ziobron and distinguished members of the
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**By amending an outdated statute to provide for a
competitive bidding process, more vulnerable children
can be helped with NO budget impact.**

In light of budget challenges, non-profit Child Advocates of SW
Connecticut, requests **amending a current earmark in statute
Section 51-10b to allow competitive bidding to help more of
Connecticut's abused or neglected children at NO additional COST
to the state.**

(Title 51, Chapter 870 Judicial Department, Sec. 51-10b)

https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_870.htm#sec_51-10b

History: In 1994, the Appropriations Committee wisely supported
Section 51-10b, to promote permanency planning for Connecticut's
abused and neglected children. The statute provided an opportunity
for one non-profit organization to monitor court files to promote
permanency for abused or neglected children. This earmark
provided a sole source contract with Children in Placement (CIP) for
state-wide permanency planning services.

- **Sec. 51-10b.** Contract with Children in Placement, Inc.,
promoting permanency planning for children. Beginning
September 1, 1994, and annually thereafter, the Judicial
Department shall contract with Children in Placement, Inc. to
provide services to assist the court in preparing and
monitoring expectations to promote permanency planning
for children. The sum of one hundred fifty thousand dollars
shall be expended annually by the Judicial Department, from
existing appropriations, for such contract.
 - (May Sp. Sess. P.A. 94-5, S. 20, 30.)
 - History: May Sp. Sess. P.A. 94-5 effective July 1, 1994.
 - [https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_870.htm#
sec_51-10b](https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_870.htm#sec_51-10b)

**Now, almost 25 years later, Sec.51-10b is an
impediment.**

Reasons to amend statute:

1. **The plain language of the statute is no longer accurate.** The monitoring service described in Section 51-10b has morphed into a court appointed special advocate program that provides volunteer advocates to work with abused or neglected children.
2. **New CASA Legislation implementation is limited.** October 1, 2016, the new Connecticut CASA legislation became law to allow more abused or neglected children to be helped by a Court Appointed Special Advocate. This new statute brings Connecticut in-line with 48 other states so that all vulnerable children could be appointed a CASA volunteer. This expansion of the CASA role requires programmatic expansion to meet the needs of additional children. But due to the limitation of Section 51-10b, the Judicial Branch has been unable to permit CASA programs to begin in certain courts.
3. **Allow additional providers.** Since 2010 there have been 2 Connecticut non-profits that provide volunteer advocates for abused or neglected children. Both are members of the National CASA Organization. A change to the statute will permit both organizations to help more children and allow flexibility for the potential of additional organizations in the future.
4. **CT Report recommended elimination.** Almost ten years ago, a 2008 Connecticut Joint Review recommended that Section 51-10b be revised to “eliminate the sole source contract for CIP and require a competitive bidding process for the award of a state contract for CASA services.”
 - a. In October 2008 the Office of the Child Advocate (Jeanne Millstein) and the Office of the Attorney General (Richard Blumenthal) published a report **“Connecticut’s Court Appointed Special Advocate Program (CASA)”**
[http://www.ct.gov/oca/lib/oca/CASAREPORT APRIL4th OCA AGO Edits FINAL VER SION - no redline.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/oca/lib/oca/CASAREPORT%20APRIL4th%20OCA%20AGO%20Edits%20FINAL%20VERSION%20-%20no%20redline.pdf)
 - i. Page 3 Key Findings - “CIP continues to shift its program focus away from volunteer monitors in favor of volunteer GALs”
 - ii. Page 3 Key Findings – “Connecticut law hinders the development of a high-quality and accountable CASA program by failing to allow competitive bidding for this program. Presently, Connecticut law mandates that the Judicial Branch annually contract with Children in Placement...”
 - iii. Page 4 Key Findings - “The Judicial Branch must provide better leadership and oversight regarding the operation of CIP, Inc. and growth of the CASA program.”
 - iv. Page 5 Recommendations – Recommendation A **“Revise the Connecticut statute regarding the CASA program to eliminate the sole source contract for CIP and require a competitive bidding process for the award of a state contract for CASA services.”**

5. **HB 5745.** This session, Representative Ziobron introduced H.B. No. 5745 to amend Section 51-10b and establish a competitive bidding process be used in the selection of Court Appointed Special Advocates. *The Bill was not raised by the Judiciary Committee.*

<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2017/TOB/h/2017HB-05745-R00-HB.htm>

AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMPETITIVE BIDDING PROCESS TO BE USED IN THE SELECTION OF COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

That section 51-10b of the general statutes be amended to require the Chief Court Administrator to engage in a competitive bidding process with respect to the selection of any entity that seeks to provide court appointed special advocate services, specifically requiring such entity to apply to the Chief Court Administrator through a competitive bidding process for the provision of such services in judicial districts throughout the state.

Statement of Purpose: To require the Chief Court Administrator to engage in a competitive bidding process with respect to the selection of any entity that seeks to provide court appointed special advocate services.

6. **Transparency, fairness, oversight.** Elimination of a sole-source earmark contract allows greater transparency, fairness to all providers, and better oversight for Judicial Branch.
7. **Help More Children!** There are over 8,000 CT children in the CT child protection system. Each child deserves an equal opportunity to have a CASA volunteer. The more organizations providing the services, the more children can be effectively served.

Child Advocates of SW Connecticut is a non-profit that recruits, trains and supervises court appointed volunteer advocates who work to ensure that each abused or neglected child has a safe, loving and permanent home. Child Advocates of SW Connecticut is a member of the National CASA Organization.

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